



Virginia Occupational Safety and Health



VOSH PROGRAM DIRECTIVE: 06-012 (e-version)

ISSUED: May 18, 1988

SUBJECT: Standard Interpretation of 1910.134 concerning Employee Use of Respirators when the Employee has Facial Hair.

A. Purpose.

This directive transmits to field personnel an interpretation of § 1910.134 of the General Industry Standards concerning employee use of respirators when the employee has facial hair.

B. Scope.

This directive applies VOSH-wide.

C. Action.

The Assistant Commissioner, Directors and Supervisors shall assure that the guidelines in the attached standard interpretation are followed when 1910.134 is cited.

D. Background.

See attached standard interpretation.

ATTACHMENTS: Letter from G. L. Hill to Carol Amato requesting interpretation of Respirator Standard, dated May 28, 1987.

VOSH Standard Interpretation dated June 11, 1987.

DISTRIBUTION: Commissioner of Labor and Industry
Assistant Commissioner of VOSH
VOSH Technical Services Director
Directors and Supervisors
Compliance Safety and Health Staff
Voluntary Compliance and Training Staff
OSHA Regional Administrator, Region III

ARK 500

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*To check
To Jones
of house
draft for my
signature
By 6/10/87
J. L. Hill*



May 28, 1987

Ms. Carol Amoto
Commissioner, Department of Labor
P.O. Box 12064
Richmond, Va. 23241

Dear Ms. Amoto:

While attending the Water Pollution Control Association Conference in Norfolk last month, I sat in on a presentation on Confined Space Entry given by Mr. Burt Ogle of the Department of Labor. Although the presentation was very good, some questions were raised concerning the use of pressure-demand self-contained breathing apparatus and facial hair. In talking with Burt after the presentation, he assured me that the state and federal regulations did not prohibit personnel with facial hair from entering a toxic atmosphere while wearing a positive pressure self contained breathing apparatus. On May 18, 1987 I telephoned Burt for written interpretation of this standard and he referred me to your office.

To help me develop a better understanding of these standards and carry out a positive program for the personnel at the plant, I am requesting an interpretation of the standard on the use of pressure-demand self-contained breathing apparatus (Scott Air Pacs, air line respirators, etc.) as they pertain to facial hair.

Thank you for your cooperation. Any questions can be directed to me at (804) 796-2459.

Sincerely,

J. L. Hill

G. L. Hill
Superintendent, Environmental Engineering



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Labor and Industry

205 North Fourth Street

P. O. Box 12064

Richmond, Virginia 23241

(804) 786-2376

June 11, 1987

Mr. G.L. Hill
Superintendent, Environmental Engineering
4100 Bermuda Hundred Road
Chester, Virginia 23831

RE: VOSH Respirator Standard Interpretation

Dear Mr. Hill:

This is in response to your inquiry of May 28, 1987, on whether VOSH Standards allow the use of pressure-demand self contained breathing apparatus when the user has facial hair.

A copy of the respirator standard 1910.134 is enclosed. Specifically, 1910.134(e)(5)(i), states that respirators shall not be worn when conditions prevent a good face seal. Such conditions may be a growth of beard, sideburns, a skull cap that projects under the facepiece, or temple pieces on glasses. This regulation does not ban facial hair on respirator users, per se, from the workplace. However, when a respirator must be worn to protect employees from airborne contaminants, it has to fit correctly, and this will require the wearer's face to be clean-shaven where the respirator seals against it.

It does not matter if hair is allowed to grow on other areas of the face, if it does not protrude under the respirator seal, or extend far enough to interfere with the device's function. Facial hair that is trimmed so that no hair underlies the seal of the respirator presents no hazard and does not violate 1910.134(e)(5)(i).

Some types of respirators do not require a face seal, and thus usually can be worn by bearded employees. Specifically, these